

Abstract 638

TITLE: Co-Designing an HIV Prevention Program Evaluation in a Rural Setting: The Community Entry Process

AUTHORS: Allen, J*; Rodriguez, E*; Tiffany, J*; Krauss, B** (* Cornell U.; ** National Dev. & Research Inst.)

ISSUE: Relatively little research has addressed the specific dynamics of HIV prevention in rural areas. The intervention approach tested in this study has been widely implemented in rural areas of New York State through the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). However, evaluation research into the intervention, dissemination, and local adaptation process and its outcomes has largely focused on urban high-seroprevalence areas.

SETTING: The rural central NY county (population <50,000) selected for this pilot study is experiencing extreme economic restructuring and social dislocation due to manufacturing plant closures and to the loss of agricultural viability. Risk indices related to HIV infection are high in several small municipalities. The county has strong human service and public health education networks eager to develop the local knowledge and resource base.

PROJECT: The project involves implementing, adapting, and testing a community-based education program for teens (15-19 years old), parents of teens, and youth service providers based on Cornell University's "Talking with Kids about HIV/AIDS" Parent Education Project. In the beginning stages of the project, staff of community organizations were contacted and asked 1) to review and comment on study plans, 2) to identify local goals that the project could help to meet, 3) to determine whether their organizations would be involved in recruitment and other efforts related to the project, and 4) to refer the researchers to other key community contacts.

RESULTS: The process of community entry began with a review of the web pages, mission statements, and current activities of local organizations. Meetings with local contacts moved rapidly to the identification of ways the proposed research could benefit local efforts. Researchers were referred to other key contacts.

LESSONS LEARNED: Specific lessons learned include: 1) The capacity to address local concerns, to welcome local input, and to provide data to local program development efforts facilitates the community entry process. 2) Local collaborators have a set of independent goals related to studies proposed by outside researchers. 3) Participatory adaptation and testing of interventions is an iterative process of building common ground. 4) This process can foster further program innovation and dissemination opportunities.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jennifer S. Tiffany

Address: Cornell University, PAM
Room 184, MVR Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

Telephone: 607-255-1942

Fax: 607-255-4071

E-mail: JST5@CORNELL.EDU